

PRESS RELEASE

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FEDERAL GRAND JURY RETURNS INDICTMENTS

Madison, Wisconsin -- A federal grand jury in the Western District of Wisconsin, sitting in Madison, has returned the following indictments. You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER CHARGED IN A MAIL FRAUD SCHEME TO OBTAIN OVER \$580,000 IN PUBLIC BENEFITS AND PROCEEDS FROM THE ESTATE OF A DISABLED RELATIVE

Victoria Biks, age 44, and Marjorie Venturella, age 69, both of Radisson, Wisconsin, have been charged with 30 counts of mail fraud and 2 counts of social security fraud. According to the indictment, Biks and Venturella engaged in two mail fraud schemes. The first involved unlawfully obtaining public benefits from various government agencies by making false statements and material omissions. The agencies involved included the Social Security Administration, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Sawyer County Health and Human Services, and the Sawyer County Circuit Court. The public benefits involved Supplemental Security Income benefits, State Supplemental Security Income benefits, Medicaid benefits, health care benefits from Sawyer County Health and Human Services, and legal guardianship services from the Sawyer County Circuit Court. The indictment alleges that the total value of the unlawfully obtained public benefits exceeded \$280,600.

The second mail fraud scheme, according to the indictment, involved Biks and Venturella defrauding the guardianship estate of a disabled person that was being managed by the Cook County Circuit Court in Illinois. The indictment alleges that Biks and Venturella hid from the Illinois Court the fact that the disabled person had been receiving public benefits for 20 years and that the money they were receiving from the guardianship estate for the disabled person's care and maintenance was actually being used by them for themselves. The indictment lists five different petitions filed with the Illinois Court by Biks and Venturella asking for money and making false statements to the Court about why they wanted the money, or what they really were going to do with

the money.

For example, in a July 1999 filing with the Court, Biks and Venturella indicated that they needed over \$84,000 to remodel Venturella's home to make it handicapped accessible. According to the indictment, the court authorized a \$30,000 payment to Venturella which she then used to purchase an automobile for herself instead of remodeling the home for the disabled person.

The indictment also alleges that in an October 2002 petition, Biks and Venturella ask for \$7,950 to pay off Venturella's VISA card bill, asserting that all of the charges related to expenses made on behalf of the disabled person. However, according to the indictment, the actual VISA bill shows numerous charges totally unrelated to the disabled person. The indictment states that the total amount of fraud related to this second mail fraud scheme exceeded \$300,000.

The indictment also includes a criminal asset forfeiture count seeking over \$415,000 in criminal proceeds from Biks and Venturella. Both defendants faces a statutory maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each of the thirty mail fraud counts. The social security fraud counts each carry a statutory maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The charges against Biks and Venturella are the result of an investigation conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, and the Sawyer County Sheriff's Office. The prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel J. Graber.

THREE MADISON RESIDENTS CHARGED WITH GUN CRIME

Three Madison residents were charged with illegal possession of a firearm in unrelated incidents. Willie Parker, DOB 2/11/80, of Madison, is charged with being a drug user in possession of a firearm and ammunition. The indictment alleges that on August 25, 2006, Parker was an unlawful user of marijuana in possession of a .45 caliber pistol and ammunition.

If convicted, Parker faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison. The charge against Parker is the result of an investigation conducted by the Madison Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney David J. Reinhard.

Aleta Haywood, DOB 3-14-81, of 2346 Allied Drive, Madison, is charged with being a drug user in possession of a firearm. The indictment alleges that on September 7, 2006, the defendant was an unlawful user of marijuana in possession of a .25 caliber pistol.

If convicted, Haywood faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The investigation of this matter was conducted by the Madison Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy M. O'Shea.

Grayland T. Harvey, Jr., DOB 10/31/83, of 4353 West Beltline Highway, Madison, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. The indictment alleges that on September 12, 2006, Harvey possessed a .357 firearm and .38 caliber ammunition.

If convicted, Harvey faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison. The investigation of this matter was conducted by the Madison Police Department. The prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy M. O'Shea.

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